DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 361 414 UD 029 397

TITLE	A People in Two Communities: Puerto Ricans on the Island and in the United States. An Exploration of the Emergence of the Puerto Rican People into Two Communities.
INSTITUTION	National Puerto Rican Coalition, Washington, DC.; Puerto Rico Community Foundation, San Juan.
SPONS AGENCY	Ford Foundation, New York, N.Y.
PUB DATE	Nov 92
NOTE	45p.
AVAILABLE FROM	National Puerto Rican Coalition, Inc., 1700 K Street, N.W., Suite 500, Washington, DC 20006 ($7.50).
PUB TYPE	Information Analyses (070) -- Reports - Descriptive (141)
EDRS PRICE	MF01 Plus Postage. PC Not Available from EDRS.
DESCRIPTORS	Acculturation; *Community Development; Community Relations; Conferences; *Cultural Interrelationships; Cultural Pluralism; Elementary Secondary Education; Higher Education; Hispanic Americans; Immigrants; *Intergroup Relations; Migrant Problems; Migration Patterns; Public Health; Puerto Rican Culture; *Puerto Ricans; *Sociocultural Patterns
IDENTIFIERS	Puerto Rican Community Development Project; Puerto Rican History; *Puerto Rico; *United States

ABSTRACT

This booklet describes the issues and findings of a series of symposia on Puerto Ricans in Puerto Rico and in the United States. From 1988 to 1992, six symposia were held, three in the United States and three in Puerto Rico, on topics such as migration, culture and language, community characteristics, strengthening relations between the two communities, economic development, community health, and education. The meetings resulted in a strategy and an agenda on which several groups agreed to collaborate. An introduction describes the symposia process. Section II discusses the emergence of the two Puerto Rican communities, their politics, migration patterns, changing perceptions, intercommunity relationships, and migration between the two areas. Section III looks at education and discusses the unique problems faced by both communities: literacy, technology, the impact of migration, retention, and teacher training. This section offers seven recommendations. Section IV considers health issues and delivery systems and policy as well as primary and preventive care, Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome, mental health, and 13 recommendations. Section V discusses community economic development starting in the 1960s and continuing particularly in the 1980s. Five findings and 13 recommendations are provided. The final section outlines the agreed-upon agenda for collaboration. Symposia participants with organizational affiliations are listed. (JB)

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A People in Two Communities:

Puerto Ricans on the Island and in the United States

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A People in Two Communities: Puerto Ricans on the Island and in the United States

An exploration of the emergence of the Puerto Rican people into two communities.

Sponsored by

National Puerto Rican Coalition, Inc.
Washington, D.C.

Puerto Rico Community Foundation
San Juan, Puerto Rico

November 1992

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Acknowledgments

The Two Communities Project, a cooperative effort between the National Puerto Rican Coalition (NPRC) and the Puerto Rico Community Foundation (PRCF), was a complex project that required the commitment and time of many individuals. It would be impossible to mention each one individually, but several deserve special recognition.

Our gratitude goes to Domingo García, Manuel Dubón, Amalia Betanzos, and José Villamil who met periodically to assess the progress of the project and provide advice.

We are indebted to all of the participants who attended the seminars and symposia, especially those who took the time to prepare papers, attend meetings, and follow up by providing additional information.

We are especially grateful to Ramón Daubón and José Villamil who conceived and initiated this unique project, and provided assistance and support during the early planning stages.

In addition, we would like to thank Grizel Ubarry for coordinating the symposia and for preparing this report; Toni Breiter of Mariposa Media Services for coauthoring several chapters and editing and producing the document; and José Cruz for his invaluable assistance and advice in coordinating the project and producing this report.

Finally, we thank the Ford Foundation and Dr. William Díaz not only for their financial support of the Two Communities Project, but also for their moral support and encouragement.

Louis Núñez
President, National
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I. Introduction

In 1988, the National Puerto Rican Coalition (NPRC) and the Puerto Rico Community Foundation (PRCF) jointly convened two seminars in a first attempt to review the similarities and differences between the two Puerto Rican communities, one on the Island and the other on the U.S. mainland; examine ways in which the two relate to each other; and assess the feasibility of establishing a meaningful partnership that could lead to continued dialogue and strengthen the relationship and ties between them. In planning these seminars, NPRC and PRCF elected to examine the issues of migration, culture, and language and how they affect each community in relation to their respective socioeconomic and political environment. Approximately 30 participants, including community leaders, academics, and policy makers, participated in the two seminars.

During the first seminar, held in November 1988 in Washington, D.C., participants discussed two topics: "The Socioeconomic Characteristics of the Two Communities," and "Language, Culture, and Puerto Rican Ethnicity." Three background papers were presented to initiate discussion: *Can Puerto Ricans in the United States Ever Become Puerto Rican Enough to be Considered Puerto Rican by Puerto Ricans in Puerto Rico?* by Samuel Betances, *Puerto Rico—Una Sola Comunidad, Un Solo Pueblo, Una Sola Nación* by Gerardo Navas, and *The Data Are Not the People* by Clara Rodríguez.

The second seminar was held in February 1989 in San Juan, Puerto Rico, and focused on the following topics: "Patterns of Implications of the Circular Migration," and "Patterns of Participation in Local Politics." Four discus-

sion papers were presented: *Circular and Return Migration Patterns* by Gloria Bonilla-Santiago, *From Sibling Rivalry to Twin Collaboration: Puerto Rican Politics in the Island and in the United States* by Juan Manuel García Passalacqua, *Determinantes Sociales en los Patrones de Retorno y Circulación de Puertorriqueños* by Saúl Pratts, and *Un Pueblo en Dos Comunidades: Los Puertorriqueños en la Isla y en los Estados Unidos* by Nydia Velásquez. The proceedings were published in March 1991 and distributed to interested persons in both communities.

These deliberations sparked a strong desire and commitment on the part of NPRC and PRCF to continue exploring ways that both communities can link strategically as one to strengthen the social, economic, and political institutions that support the Puerto Rican community.

In 1991, with support from the Ford Foundation, NPRC and PRCF cosponsored four symposia that focused on selected issues that are deemed critical to these communities and can most effectively be addressed through a process of joint collaboration. The purpose of these symposia was to structure a process that would lead to the development of strategies and strengthen the relationship between the two communities. The initial seminar series held in 1988-89 helped identify many of the differences between Puerto Ricans on the Island and those on the mainland, at the same time examining how both Puerto Rican populations share common strengths and problems.

Building on the existence of capable leadership within both communities, the 1991 symposia were developed to identify linkages that address solutions to common problems. Given the variety and complexity of issues that the project could realistically address, the decision was made to

focus on education, health care, and community economic development. These three issues were viewed as critical within these two communities.

Two symposia were held in 1991. The first, on the issue of community economic development, was held in Puerto Rico on May 9 and 10. Approximately 10 experts (practitioners, policy makers, and academics) in the field of community economic development from both communities were invited to discuss issues and problems, successful models, and solutions.

On September 18 and 19, the second 1991 symposium, cosponsored with the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS), was held in Washington, D.C., and included a seminar on "Health Care Policy and Delivery of Human Services: A Puerto Rican Agenda." Both events provided a forum for Puerto Rican experts and senior officials of HHS and other federal agencies to exchange information on key issues and discuss strategies for the future direction of programs and services to Puerto Ricans.

In 1992 the final two symposia were conducted, both in Puerto Rico. The first, on April 2 and 3, was on the topic of education and it focused on public education. The format was similar to the previous two: it brought together approximately 12 practitioners, academics, and policy makers to discuss issues and strategies for addressing the problems and challenges of public education as they relate to Puerto Ricans.

The final symposium was held on June 25 and 26, 1992, also in Puerto Rico. It was structured to allow participants to reassess recommendations previously discussed in order to select those that could be seriously explored and imple-

mented over the next two years. The implementation of a selected number of recommendations was viewed as the most effective way of institutionalizing the process for continued dialogue and strengthening linkages between the leadership of both communities.

It should be noted that, in line with the cultural and language differences permeating the relationship between the two communities, all the sessions were bilingual. Each person was free to speak in English or Spanish, the language in which they felt most comfortable.

This report offers one view of the emergence of two distinct Puerto Rican communities; reports on the discussions that occurred in each of the symposia on education, health care, and community economic development; lists the recommendations that emerged from each session; and outlines the strategies that the participants selected as the most likely to engender effective and long-lasting cooperation between the two communities and, thereby, lead to positive change.

II. The Emergence of Two Communities

As a people whose roots are inextricably bound to ancestors whose migratory patterns brought them to the Island, Puerto Ricans have long had a penchant for movement. Their Indian ancestry originated in the Caribbean Islands, their Spanish blood in Andalucia, and their "negritude" in West Africa. It is not surprising, then, that while they love their island, many Puerto Ricans flee its confinement to seek greener pastures.

Puerto Ricans became U.S. citizens under the Jones Act in 1917. After World War II, the industrialization of the Island—a U.S. possession since 1898—resulted in the decline of agriculture as a major employer and displaced a large part of the labor force. Between 1945 and 1965, aided by newly available low-cost air travel, over a million Puerto Ricans migrated to the U.S. mainland. Most gravitated to the cities and jobs that since the 19th century had facilitated the entry of European immigrants into the economic mainstream.

This massive migration effectively served as an escape valve for population and labor pressures produced by the eradication of such diseases as malaria and dysentery and by the displacement of the *jíbaro* as the coffee, tobacco, and sugar farms and plantations disappeared. The growing industrial economy of the post-War years clearly was a major factor in this migration to the U.S. mainland.

The route of migration is essentially the same today as it was nearly 50 years ago: first to New York City, where many have friends or relatives who can assist them in settling and finding jobs; and then on to cities and towns in

other states when they have established firm footing. Hard work and savings permitted many migrants to return to the Island regularly, sharing with their families and friends stories of economic opportunities on the mainland that were not easily obtained on the Island. This inspired many to follow in their predecessors' footsteps. Others arrived on the mainland hired directly from the Island for agricultural and industrial jobs in Illinois, Michigan, New Jersey, Ohio, Pennsylvania, or Indiana. Most of these eventually gravitated to the urban centers in those states.

Gradually, a new generation of Puerto Ricans has evolved. Increasingly born in the States, they are aware of their Puerto Rican roots, but their primary language is now English, often sprinkled with Puerto Rican colloquialisms. The major difference between this mainland Puerto Rican and his cousins on the Island is the recognition of being a minority among other groups, forced to compete for the still limited opportunities afforded by U.S. society to the wide range of minority groups. On the other hand, while economic problems on the Island continue, Puerto Ricans are in fact the majority and control the institutions that govern their lives.

Here is where Puerto Ricans became two distinct communities. While they share a common language and heritage, they have had very different experiences in influencing public policies or controlling political or social institutions. As the employment base in the urban centers where most Puerto Ricans settled began to shift from the manufacturing to the service and high technology industries, the unemployment rate among Puerto Ricans rose dramatically, precipitating movement between the Island and the mainland as better opportunities for jobs, health care, and other services were sought.

The returning migrants often were not viewed by their Island cousins as having bettered their socioeconomic standing. Contributing to this perception was the image of Puerto Ricans as an "urban underclass" in the mainland cities. This was not without foundation. In the 1990s, more than a generation after the great migration ended in the 1960s, three times as many Puerto Ricans on the U.S. mainland live in poverty compared to the general population. This is at a time when other newer migrant groups are surpassing Puerto Ricans in attaining social and economic success. For Island Puerto Ricans, this indicates a failure of the individual, not of the system. Yet the fact that over half of the Island population still lives below the U.S. poverty level appears to have had less impact, possibly because a highly visible middle class emerged in Puerto Rico during the same period. The perception remains that there has been great progress on the Island and stagnation among the mainland Puerto Ricans.

The two communities increasingly have come to view each other across the ocean not as brothers, but as distant relatives with family ties but little else in common. Those on the Island question whether the Stateside Puerto Rican community can have an identity of its own; Puerto Rican mainlanders perceive the Island to be essentially a completely Latino environment where the *mañana* attitude still prevails.

Despite these mutual misunderstandings, however, a growing awareness of mutual dependency has emerged. In 1989, a Department of Puerto Rican Community Affairs in the United States replaced the former Migration Office of the Commonwealth's Department of Labor and was given cabinet status. The growing realization by the Government of Puerto Rico that the Stateside community could be a

force for influencing public policies and measures in support of the Island clearly was one of the rationales for this step. Indeed, a Puerto Rican community leadership has emerged on the mainland that is beginning to exert just such an influence. This is obvious in the growing number of Puerto Ricans being elected to local, state, and national office.

Migration to and from the U.S. mainland remains a dominant factor in the daily lives of many Puerto Ricans in both communities. Most Puerto Ricans have some ties with the Island or the mainland through an immediate relative, a distant cousin, or a friend. Circular migration, the frequent movement back and forth between the Island and the mainland, remains a phenomenon that can be compared to an invisible umbilical cord that nurtures the desire and need to remain somehow connected to the motherland.

Today, there are over 2.7 million Puerto Ricans living on the mainland and 3.6 million on the Island. Interestingly, the mainland Puerto Rican population has grown faster than the Island population in every one of the last eight decades. If the growth rates of the 1980s continue for the two populations, the mainland Puerto Rican population may well surpass the Island population by the year 2010.

Puerto Rican migration to the mainland is no longer concentrated in one or two states. Between 1980 and 1990, the growth of the Puerto Rican population took place mainly in medium-sized cities with populations between 50,000 and 250,000. In 1980, 43% of all mainland Puerto Ricans lived in New York City. In 1990, the proportion decreased to one-thir'

TABLE I
States with the Largest
Puerto Rican Concentrations

State	1980 Puerto Rican Population	1990 Puerto Rican Population	% of Change
New York	978,616	1,086,601	11.0
New Jersey	242,367	320,133	32.1
Florida	95,663	247,010	158.2
Massachusetts	74,910	151,193	101.8
Pennsylvania	91,802	148,988	62.2
Connecticut	88,164	146,842	66.6
Illinois	132,012	146,059	10.6
California	93,005	126,417	35.9
Ohio	31,806	45,853	44.2
Texas	21,956	42,981	95.8

In assessing this growth in population, it became evident that there was a need to examine the ability of public support programs in the areas of education, employment, health, welfare, and family assistance to meet the challenge of providing services for this migrating population. The problems are exacerbated by a tenuous economy and shifting government priorities which have caused substantial reductions in support programs.

The lack of adequate government resources to address the education, health-care, and employment needs of Puerto Ricans in both communities is affecting the ability of many families to maintain stable households. Uncertain about their future, many again cross the air bridge between the

Island and the mainland to seek better opportunities. High unemployment rates and reduced assistance from government sources link both communities as families move to and from the U.S. mainland seeking jobs, health care, or educational opportunities.

As Puerto Ricans migrate to and from the United States, start new families, and commute to and from Puerto Rico to visit family and friends, address personal needs, or conduct business, they are influenced by the differences in lifestyles and by the impact of the mainland U.S. culture. However, regardless of how migration affects changes in lifestyles, cultural norms, or value systems, language remains one of the most important common elements linking the two communities. It is as important to learn English in the United States as it is to retain Spanish as a means of identification as a Puerto Rican and to remain connected to what Samuel Betances of Northeastern Illinois University refers to as Puerto Ricans' "umbilical cord to culture." In fact, culture, language, and ethnicity are of paramount importance in linking the two communities whose relationship depends heavily on how they perceive each other.

In an effort to keep the discussions focused and manageable, the planners of the symposia selected issues that were of mutual concern and offered the most promise for cooperation between the communities. After much deliberation, it was decided that three issues merited close examination: education, health care, and community economic development. The following chapters provide an overview of the discussions of each issue, summarizing mutual concerns and needs and outlining recommendations.

III. Education

Es importante destacar que la aspiración fundamental de nuestro sistema educativo es que cada estudiante reciba una educación de excelencia, que propicie el pleno desarrollo de su personalidad, de sus capacidades intelectuales, así como el fortalecimiento de los derechos del ser humano y sus libertades fundamentales. Es necesario que este proceso educativo le permita al estudiante desarrollar las destrezas para enfrentarse a un mundo convulsionado socialmente y altamente tecnológico. Las decisiones que él tome con respecto a su ubicación en el mundo del trabajo, estarán condicionadas por su dominio de las competencias académicas y vocacionales y su deseo de superación para enfrentar su entorno social, sea este en Puerto Rico o en los Estados Unidos.

Gloria Baquero
Deputy Secretary
Puerto Rico Department of Education

As U.S. citizens who straddle a cultural and linguistic bridge between the Island and the mainland, Puerto Ricans are confronted with a special set of problems that severely affect the educational needs of the children in both communities. For instance, both must deal with a public educational system that is inefficient; with family migration patterns that move school-age children back and forth between school systems; and with high levels of poverty, drug use, and poor health that contribute to the high drop-out rates experienced by Puerto Ricans. Census data for 1989 show that 32.1% of mainland Puerto Ricans ages 16 to 24 had dropped out of school. Puerto Rico Department of Education data for 1989 indicate that 49% of Island Puerto Rican youth dropped out of school.

Literacy

According to Nathan Quiñones, former Chancellor of the New York City Public School System, "The public school system's failure to teach and retain language minorities is a historical one dating back 340 years when it was the English who pressed the Dutch for bilingual services." Today, bilingual education and related language proficiency instruction in both Puerto Rican communities remain severely underfunded, politically unpopular, and unable to address the magnitude of the problem. As a result, a significant portion of the Puerto Rican student population is finding it difficult to achieve literacy in either English or Spanish. Both communities must come to terms with how students can become proficient in both languages.

Technology

Changes in the global economy require a different approach to education for all students, but particularly for linguistic or racial minorities whose growing numbers will make them the core of the labor force early in the next century. Between 1990 and 2005, the net additions to the U.S. labor force are projected to be as follows: Hispanics, 27.8%, blacks, 15.8%, Asians and others, 10.1%. In other words, more than half of the projected labor force will be "minority."

An increase in automation and a shift from manufacturing to service industries demand that today's labor force acquire an entirely different set of skills. The growing need for people able to work in such high technology fields as computer programming is also requiring a shift in education focus. Unfortunately, the school systems in both communities are not prepared to address these changes adequately, which in turn leaves a vast number of students ill-prepared for employment.

Impact of Migration on Education

According to Celeste Benitez, Secretary of the Department of Education of Puerto Rico, an estimated 30,000 children each year leave and/or enter the educational system of Puerto Rico. This movement between school systems affects not only the child and his or her parents, but also teachers who must make adjustments in the classroom. These migrating children form a common student body that both communities share and must attempt to educate. Unfortunately, inconsistent record-keeping and transfer between the Island and Stateside systems often lead to incorrect assessment of abilities and class placement. Often students are "left back" and, therefore, are overage in their grade level, which is a further cause of frustration for the student. It is clear that efforts must be made to create linkages between Island and Stateside schools with high concentrations of Puerto Ricans to assure an easier transition from one system to the other.

Retention

High drop-out rates among Puerto Rican students from both communities continues to be a persistent problem, apparently more severe on the Island than on the U.S. mainland. The factors contributing to this problem are extensive and not unique to Puerto Rican students. The problem of attrition has an impact on all ethnic and racial groups, including non-Hispanic children. Clearly, the educational system of the past is inadequate and unable to meet the challenge of providing an education for the increasingly diverse racial and linguistic minorities who will represent a significant portion of the U.S. labor force by the year 2005.

The high drop-out rate at the secondary school level affects the ability of students to attain higher education. In

1990, 9.6% of Puerto Ricans on the mainland had completed college compared to 5.5% of Mexican Americans, 20.4% of Cubans, 15.9% of Other Hispanics, 11.3% of blacks, and 23.1% of whites. Progress has been made, however. In 1984 the figure for Puerto Ricans was only 5.6%; nevertheless, they still lag behind all groups except Mexican Americans.

To provide Puerto Rican youngsters an opportunity to achieve educational equity, fundamental and systemic changes in the education of all children are required. Curriculum reform that addresses the diverse needs of minority children and also provides students with the necessary skills for employment or higher education must be accelerated. Today, on both the U.S. mainland and the Island of Puerto Rico, there is much discussion about restructuring schools to respond to high attrition rates, the job market, and the environment of children. Schools throughout the country are experimenting with new approaches, such as school-based management, curriculum reform, and teacher training, in an attempt to begin seeking long-term solutions. But this is just a beginning.

Teacher Training

El salón de clases debe ser un lugar en el que se explore, se enriquezca y se modifique la experiencia de este estudiante. El agente facilitador de este proceso es el maestro. La ensenanza a la cual se expone el estudiante debe servir de motivación y estímulo para que pueda comprender la necesidad y acepte el reto de continuar estudiando. Sólo así podrá alcanzar las metas que le permitirán vivir plenamente.

María Isabel Batista, Principal
Antonio S. Pedreira School
Río Piedras, Puerto Rico

At the heart of addressing the educational needs of students in both communities is the ongoing preparation and training of bilingual and bicultural teachers. The need for bilingual teachers is acute. According to Dr. Isaura Santiago Santiago, President of Eugenio María de Hostos Community College in the Bronx, New York, "Only 10% of the U.S. teacher force is from minority groups, down from 12% in 1963, an issue of major concern because of the critical role minority teachers play as role models for students and toward contributing significantly to helping children understand diverse cultures."

Recommendations

- Strengthen the linkages between Puerto Rico's Department of Education and major school districts on the U.S. mainland with large concentrations of Puerto Ricans. Specifically, create strategies to address student mobility, improve cultural understanding, and address the language proficiency needs of students.

- Develop programs between Puerto Rico and U.S. mainland school districts to address the educational needs of students and families affected by circular migration. Specifically, engage in research that would assist educators to better understand this population and how to provide services that would not delay or set back their educational development.

- Develop more collaborative programs between colleges, schools, and boards of education that address curriculum reform, such as the demonstration project carried out by the Antonio S. Pedreira Elementary School and the Department of Education of Puerto Rico. The two established a Talent School Project for grades K-6 which involves both parents and teachers in the decision-making process

for developing children's academic and nonacademic skills. Innovative and nontraditional methods of teaching are used in the project.

- Promote a better understanding of Puerto Rican history, culture, and migration patterns both in Puerto Rico and in the United States within public and private schools through courses, student exchange programs, videos, books, and other educational materials.

- Strengthen or create programs that will enable students in Puerto Rico to be more proficient in English.

- Advocate for strengthening bilingual and language-proficiency programs for youngsters and adults in both communities.

- Promote the creation of teacher training models such as the Consortium for Minorities in Teaching Careers (CMTC) between colleges in Puerto Rico and predominantly minority colleges. The Consortium consists of nine institutions of higher education that serve significant numbers of minority students in the United States and Puerto Rico. CMTC aims at expanding the pool of minority students entering and successfully completing teacher preparation programs in college, and encouraging their interest in teaching in predominantly minority schools and school districts.

IV. Health

The single greatest health-care challenge facing the Puerto Rican community is reasonable access to health-care services. Despite a number of past and current programs by government and industry, there is a growing cohort of Puerto Ricans who lack access to many basic health-care and human services.

Eric Muñoz, M.D.
Medical Director
University of Medicine
and Dentistry of New Jersey

Within the health-care delivery system, three issues were identified during discussions as having the greatest impact in both communities: the lack of access to health services and medical care, the quality of the health-care delivery system, and the cost of providing health care. In both communities, these issues are exacerbated by language, similarities or differences in culture, migration, and a high incidence of poverty.

Dr. Jaime Rivera Dueño, former Secretary of Health in Puerto Rico and now with the Instituto del SIDA de San Juan, described the health care situation in Puerto Rico as "confused and paradoxical": confused because of the difficulties in defining health problems and issues as they relate to health needs, and paradoxical in view of the lack of resources and capabilities that the Island still has in spite of dramatic progress.

The health-care delivery system is so fragmented and controlled by so many overlapping bureaucracies that it is

difficult to identify and define the real health issues affecting Puerto Ricans. Even with technological advances and extensive medical services, basic preventive immunizations are not available for the unserved/underserved. The troubling increase in outbreaks of measles and tuberculosis, practically nonexistent a decade ago, are of serious concern today.

Primary and Preventive Care

As medical costs continue to escalate, poor families are forgoing basic preventive health care. Both communities suffer from inadequate preventive services. In fact, many causes of death for Puerto Ricans, such as heart disease, diabetes, hypertension, and pulmonary disease, would be reduced substantially through either primary or secondary prevention if it were accessible. Government resources in both communities are sorely lacking and are further compromised by the shortage of nurses and health-care practitioners who are willing to work in poor urban or rural communities.

According to Dr. Dueño, "In Puerto Rico, for instance, 1.8 million persons [50% of the population] are considered to be medically indigent and as American citizens are not eligible for full Medicaid services, the equivalent of $2,000 per year per patient compared to Puerto Rico's eligibility of $43 per year per patient." Puerto Ricans are but one of many ethnic/racial groups that find themselves without health insurance while the nation suffers through a health-care crisis caused by soaring medical costs.

Drug abuse, crime, and AIDS are having a severe effect on the health-care delivery systems in both communities. Prevention strategies that go beyond mass media messages are desperately needed. High-risk communities need

services that provide for community participation and that will remain in these communities for the long haul. Dr. Herman Stubbe of Guaynabo best described how lack of health care, poverty, and substance abuse can affect a community, such as in the case of Gurabo:

Gurabo has 110 pregnant teenagers per 1,000, aged 15 to 19 years old, one of the highest teenage pregnancy rates in Puerto Rico since 1980. At the same time, half of the pregnant teenagers begin their prenatal care after the first trimester. Gurabo has three institutions for drug rehabilitation where 86% of the population have a history of intravenous drug use, 28.8% are bisexual, 30% have a history of STDs [sexually transmitted diseases], and 31% of hepatitis. Of 104 individuals, 42.3% had a positive ELISA [the test that screens for HIV] and Western Blot HIV test [the test that confirms HIV]. Only 1% stated they used condoms. Some or all of these individuals may be sexually active in the Gurabo community.

In the Gurabo Emergency Room, from July 1, 1990, to June 30, 1991, there were 3,403 visits for accidental trauma, and 2,111 for bronchial asthma episodes. These two leading diagnoses may be prevented or controlled by adequate primary self-care. In fact, studies have shown that asthma mortality is related to the socioeconomic status of the patients and access to care.

The immunization status of the elderly over 65 years old in Gurabo reveals only 12% and 19% were immunized for influenza and pneumococcus respectively in 1989. In addition, care for the

elderly is fragmented and provided by multiple physicians with no one in charge. Children less than five years old had immunization rates of 46.1% for polio and DPT [diptheria, pertussis, tetanus], 61.22% for MMR-1 [measles, mumps, rubella] and 17.1 for Hib [meningitis]. Only 47.4% of these children had been tuberculin-tested in spite of a resurgence of tuberculosis in the community.

Steps for improving the health of communities such as Gurabo cannot be based solely on traditional forms of health-care practices. Health education, public health services, and community participation are essential ingredients in addressing the needs of poor communities confronted with high incidences of drug abuse, violence, and poverty conditions. Furthermore, poor education, language barriers, cultural differences, and racial/ethnic biases are factors that contribute to the lack of reasonable access to primary care.

AIDS

AIDS, the devastating epidemic which destroys the body's immune system, was once seen primarily as a disease of homosexual and bisexual men. This is no longer the case. AIDS is spreading rapidly in minority communities. Hispanics and blacks constitute 21% of cumulative AIDS cases reported to the federal Centers for Disease Control (CDC) since 1981, when the first AIDS cases appeared. Among Hispanics, the incidence rate for AIDS is far higher among Puerto Ricans than among Mexican Americans, Cubans, or other Hispanic subgroups.

Louis Núñez
President
National Puerto Rican Coalition

AIDS in the Puerto Rican community has reached epidemic proportions and is rapidly spreading among women and children. According to Nydia Velázquez, former Director of the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico's Department of Puerto Rican Community Affairs in the United States, "In New York, AIDS has surpassed homicide as the leading cause of death among Puerto Rican and Latino men and women in their mid-20s to mid-30s. In Puerto Rico, as of 1992 there were 7,000 reported cases, not including those who have tested positive for the HIV virus but are not evidencing symptoms, or unreported cases."

The inequity of AIDS funds available to local municipalities, community organizations, and to Puerto Rico (which has a $79 million cap on Medicaid funding) is as devastating as the disease itself. Families are faced with very few resources and little assistance and many are either forced to commute to and from the Island, secure expensive medical care, or return to the Island to await death. In both communities, the municipal hospital system is severely strained, while very little is being done to educate families on how best to manage their care once a family member is infected with the disease.

Mental Health

> *Multiple causes could be attributed to the problem of mental health, but basically its etiology is bio-psycho-social. Our main concern with this situation is that for many reasons some people seem to accept this as a problem. Individually, it seems, no one wants to call it by its name, so everybody camouflages it with such phrases as lack of quality of life or poor lifestyles.*
>
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Determining the severity of mental disease in both communities is complicated by the lack of reliable data and by how mental health has been defined by society. Although it is not clear who receives these services, statistics related to crime, substance abuse, AIDS, and child abuse are indicators of the need for mental health care. Insurance coverage for mental health services or substance abuse treatment are limited among low- and moderate-income households whose resources for health care are already strained. Rehabilitation centers to treat either drug or alcohol addiction are few and all have long waiting lists.

The AIDS epidemic has further strained existing mental health service providers who are unable to assist victims and families stressed by the stigma of the disease and the anticipation of death. Domestic violence and child abuse could well be minimized through outreach, education, and early intervention; unfortunately, intervention in these two areas is often too late and is further delayed by cultural taboos. Mental health care, particularly among poor Puerto Rican households, should be given a higher priority by both governments. Providing such care is less complex and less expensive than dealing with problems that occur later in life when intervention may no longer be a feasible solution.

Recommendations

- There must be greater emphasis on advocating for public policies that address comprehensive primary care and that improve the progression from self-care to institutional care.

- Coordination of medical services for Puerto Ricans on the Island and on the mainland is essential, specifically development of information exchange services that will

allow a patient to travel between both communities with reasonable access to their medical records in both places.

- In the schools, there should be more emphasis on early sex education and family planning. There should be a required curriculum dealing with the family life cycle, especially the formation of new families. Parenting programs are also needed for teenagers and for dysfunctional families seeking help.

- In high-risk areas, programs to prevent and manage alcohol and drug abuse should be established with the participation and support of both the community and the government. Pilot projects may be funded by private and public sources with future funding coming principally from government agencies.

- Funding to improve the training of primary care professionals, and for diagnosing and treating patients with chronic diseases at their homes and at primary care centers/clinics, needs to be a priority of both federal and state governments.

- More funding is needed for institutional care at the community level for patients with chronic diseases who are unable to be taken care of in their homes.

- Mental health services should be strengthened by improving the behavioral science skills of primary care practitioners and by adding behavioral science personnel to primary care centers/clinics.

- Redirecting/retraining groups of physician assistants/nurse practitioners for underserved areas using managed care models and targeting specific diseases would

help make medical care more readily available. Significant fiscal incentives are needed to encourage outpatient health care delivery.

- In addressing AIDS, a number of recommendations were proposed that would help both communities deal with one of the most controversial and critical health problems affecting Puerto Ricans:
  - Establish as many mechanisms and linkages as possible between groups in Puerto Rico and the U.S. mainland to increase the level of awareness of AIDS prevention among Puerto Ricans.
  - Seek ways the two communities can raise funds from the public and private sectors to target neighborhoods hardest hit by the epidemic in both communities.
  - Make treatment on demand available for all addicts who request it, since intravenous drug use is the direct or indirect cause of over 60% of AIDS cases in Puerto Rico and the U.S. mainland. Additional funding needs to be targeted to the development and expansion of rehabilitation centers.
  - Institute research on AIDS affecting Puerto Ricans on the mainland and on the Island and disaggregate data for Puerto Ricans with AIDS.

V. Community Economic Development

The community economic development (CED) movement has been growing since the early 1960s, especially during the last decade. In contrast, it has been only in recent years that Puerto Rican communities on the U.S. mainland and on the Island of Puerto Rico have become involved in the creation of community development corporations (CDCs) that support the development of housing, businesses, financial services, and other entrepreneurial activities.

How CED has been able to succeed in poor communities is still not fully understood by many government officials, bankers, foundations, corporations, and other financial institutions. This problem, however, is more prevalent in Puerto Rico where government agencies and lenders resist even experimenting with the concept. On the U.S. mainland, the CED movement has been much more effective in attracting public/private partnerships that generate the interest of lenders, government officials, and other funders. For instance, a 1989 study conducted by the National Congress for Community Economic Development (NCCED) in Washington, D.C., surveyed 1,160 CDCs throughout the United States, of which about 88% produced 320,000 units of housing. Together, these organizations created or retained nearly 90,000 permanent jobs in their communities in the past five years and helped develop 17.4 million square feet of commercial or industrial space.

In comparison to other ethnic/racial groups, the Puerto Rican community has fewer organized CDCs that could gain access to the new national programs or the myriad of private and public programs that now channel resources to nonprofit

community groups to create housing and business development opportunities in low-income neighborhoods.

The Puerto Rican community continues to depend on local organizations that primarily provide social services, which are vital but are vulnerable to government cutbacks and do not deal with the long-term economic needs of neighborhoods. Many of these organizations are seeking ways they can enter the field; however, because of limited resources they are able to pursue such development only on a very small scale or at a gradual pace. As corporations, foundations, and government programs become more aware of the field and continue to expand their commitment to funding CED-related activities, there is concern that the Puerto Rican community will continue to be unable to take advantage of these resources primarily because it lacks the human capital and organizational structure needed to develop such initiatives.

Both communities identified the need for technical assistance and training in CED. Puerto Rico, specifically, needs technical assistance and training in helping neighborhoods become organized to create CBOs as viable alternatives for the provision of social services and economic development. Presently, there are only a few CBOs established in Puerto Rico. Furthermore, both communities need to break out of the mind-set that CBOs are solely for charitable and social welfare purposes, instead of vehicles for empowering communities to become more economically viable. Unfortunately, the financing of CED projects in both communities remains a major problem. Funds for predevelopment and construction of small experimental projects are competitive and scarce. Both communities need to explore ways to attract existing mainstream dollars as well as create alternative sources for financing CED projects.

In a study conducted by NPRC in 1991 (*Community Economic Development in Puerto Rican Neighborhoods* by Dr. Lois Athey) approximately 50 Puerto Rican CBOs were surveyed on the U.S. mainland to determine their involvement in CED and to assess how these organizations can become more effective in pursuing CED projects. This study, as well as a working paper on community economic development in Puerto Rico commissioned by the Puerto Rico Community Foundation (*La Empresa Comunal: Lecciones de Casos Exitosos en Puerto Rico* by Dr. Edwin Meléndez) are the only two documents that provide an overview of the seriousness of the lack of viable economic development strategies in the Puerto Rican community. Both reports were discussed at the seminar and their findings are presented below.

Findings

- Puerto Rican organizations lack sufficient capacity-building skills to start or sustain CED projects. The development of human capital is both time-consuming and expensive. Available training programs are costly and once personnel are trained they often seek better paying jobs. Also, many of the available training programs tend to target senior-level staff. There is a need to create training programs that tap middle- to entry-level staff who are likely to remain in their communities and represent the majority of employees in these organizations. In Puerto Rico, training programs need to be in Spanish and sensitive to cultural differences in how institutions on the Island view the concept of CED.

- The Puerto Rican communities in both Puerto Rico and the U.S. mainland have not fared well in increasing their ability to raise capital or attract and retain investment in low-income areas. On the mainland, for instance, Puerto Rican organizations have not been as successful as other ethnic or racial groups in gaining access to substan-

tial amounts of city dollars, state funds, or grants and loans from foundations, national and local intermediaries, or alternative loan funds. In Puerto Rico this problem is more acute since many of these capital resources are located on the mainland.

- The provision of technical assistance to stimulate housing production and business development, and to improve negotiating skills, is sorely needed to assist fledgling organizations become players in the CED field. Presently, few have the additional resources to hire a consultant as well as commit predevelopment funds to jump-start a project. The existing local and national intermediaries that offer these services to Puerto Rican CBOs are limited and generally prefer not to focus on organizations that are pursuing their first project and, therefore, are more likely to need additional assistance.

- There is an enormous need for both communities to learn more about the field, which is continually changing, especially with the passage of the Community Reinvestment Act by Congress. The legislation requires banks to meet the credit needs of low- and moderate-income neighborhoods or face a possible community challenge. In most cases, Puerto Rican neighborhoods and community groups lack the skills to negotiate with bankers to establish innovative programs designed to provide home mortgages as well as fund community revitalization and small business expansion.

- Only by being able to increase the capacity of Puerto Rican organizations to pursue CED projects will Puerto Ricans be able to attract and retain the commitment of lenders, investors, and funding sources.

Recommendations

- Increase the number of Puerto Rican community leaders involved in the CED field by providing training programs, services, and technical assistance targeting the special needs of this community.

- Produce training materials that are bilingual and address such topics as housing development, business development, and community revitalization. Case studies on Puerto Rican neighborhoods and successful CED projects are needed.

- Develop a network of Puerto Rican community-based groups that will exchange information about new programs and successful models, and convene periodic conferences devoted to CED issues.

- Cultivate and nurture liaisons with federal CED agencies, such as the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), the Small Business Administration (SBA), the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS), and the Economic Development Administration (EDA), and ensure that Puerto Ricans are able to gain access to new programs and funding initiatives.

- Look at existing support systems for entrepreneurial ventures and explore ways in which these programs can address the needs of the Puerto Rican community.

- Advocate for increased Puerto Rican representation on the staffs and boards of directors of major national intermediaries, alternative loan funds, and other CED institutions.

- Develop strategies that will increase access to consultants and technical assistance providers who are famil-

iar with the Puerto Rican community and are able to create development models that are responsive to the needs of both communities.

- Play an active role in advocating for more opportunities for education, training, and employment in the CED field. Promote programs, such as scholarships, that encourage careers in the CED field and stress entrepreneurship.

- Develop training programs that are within the financial reach of Puerto Rican groups and are locally based to be readily accessible to a large number of people.

- Explore the concept of training Puerto Ricans at existing community development organizations and at social service agencies using mentorship and internship programs.

- Seek to work with local intermediaries or regional authorities to create microenterprise loan pools, gain access to larger sources of funds, and advocate for greater collaboration between successful Puerto Rican business persons, the small business sector, and the nonprofit community.

- Advocate at the federal level (HUD, SBA, etc.) for increased funding for programs that promote small business development and affordable housing as well as track Community Reinvestment Act legislation and compliance with new rules and regulations.

- Establish an entity or mechanism for advocating for and gaining access to financing programs that will generate capital for CED projects, such as affordable housing and small business start-ups/expansions, and provide training and technical assistance to Puerto Rican community-based organizations.

VI. An Agenda for Collaboration

Throughout these symposia, participants recognized the importance of continued dialogue that would lead to the implementation of strategies that foster unity between both communities and improve the quality of life for all Puerto Ricans. Both NPRC and PRCF expressed interest in pursuing activities that would focus on specific strategies that could be implemented through various pilot projects. The final symposium was structured to allow participants to reassess recommendations previously discussed in the symposia on education, health care, and community economic development in order to select those that could be seriously explored and implemented over a reasonable time period. Participants viewed the implementation of a select number of recommendations as the most effective way of continuing the dialogue and strengthening linkages between the leadership of both communities.

Both NPRC and PRCF view the Two Communities Project as an important collaborative program that can significantly increase understanding between the two Puerto Rican communities. Strategies presented in this report represent a major step in creating linkages that can produce change. NPRC and PRCF are committed to continuing the project and working with both communities and their leadership to seek ways to implement these strategies.

The following is an overview of the recommendations selected by participants for each issue for future exploration and implementation.

Education

The educational systems on the U.S. mainland and on the Island share a common student body that migrates to and from Puerto Rico. To deal with this problem, a common commitment needs to be made to these children and their parents. The following strategies were identified as best addressing this common commitment:

1. Convene a series of meetings in those states with high concentrations of Puerto Ricans. These meetings should involve state and local education commissioners, key civic leaders, educators, Congressional leaders, the Secretary of Education of Puerto Rico, and other high-ranking officials to identify and discuss the specific needs of this common student body as well as strategies that can be implemented to address the educational needs of Puerto Ricans.

2. Student mobility is clearly a form of *interrupted education* which affects not only the child and his or her parents, but also teachers who must make adjustments in the classroom. Previously, the Ford Foundation funded a program for a concept referred to as the "Educational Passport" as a way to help these students avoid being displaced. The result of this program should be reviewed and evaluated to determine the applicability of the concept under existing circumstances. This effort needs to be coupled with the identification and implementation of transitional models that can help families and their children become familiar with their school environment. These models could provide families with appropriate orientation, information on programs and available options, and a clearer understanding of school rules and requirements that would help them adjust better to their children's new school environment.

3. Research should be conducted on the experiences and problems families encounter when migrating to and from Puerto Rico to learn more about how such mobility affects the educational experiences of their children and what can be done to reduce the negative aspects of migration.

4. The advantage of a bicultural heritage in a global economy should be stressed. Effective bilingual and bicultural educational models implemented in both Puerto Rico and the U.S. mainland should be identified and, where applicable, replicated in both communities.

Health Care

The health care delivery system is so fragmented and controlled by so many vast bureaucracies that the average person remains confused and unaware of his or her health-care diagnosis and treatment needs. The majority have no written record, report, or profile of medical diagnosis or treatment. Recognizing the high level of mobility within the Puerto Rican community on the U.S. mainland and on the Island, participants saw the need to focus on ways to improve *obtaining* and *transferring* medical care information to permit these individuals to receive appropriate health care, thus reducing delays and unnecessary costs.

Historically, bureaucracies, hospitals, medical centers, and physicians have been unable to effectively transfer medical records between each other. In order for the transfer of such information to work, the responsibility must be that of the individual; it must be patient-driven. In response to this, the participants recommended that a pilot project be developed to test a *medical information exchange system* in which the patient has access to a health card of his or her medical records. A medical information exchange

system or health card will address the following needs:

- begin to educate individuals on becoming more informed about their medical diagnosis and treatment,
- allow immediate transfer of medical information to doctors treating patients who migrate to and from Puerto Rico,
- reduce the need for conducting additional expensive and often painful medical tests due to the unavailability of medical records, and
- reduce the cost of health care.

The pilot program would study the logistics of how such a system can be set up to facilitate the transfer of information upon request of the individual. It also would examine various modes for the transfer of information, and how such a service could be covered by the existing health insurance programs.

Community Economic Development

The diversity and complexity of the community economic development movement requires further assessment of how NPRC and PRCF can develop a strategy that supports the varied needs of both communities. One possibility is to establish a national intermediary capable of generating revenues for the development of CED projects in both communities. Other strategies proposed are listed below.

- Develop partnerships to provide training, leadership development, and technical assistance in community economic development that serve the needs of both communities.

- Explore how both communities can advocate for increased financial support for CED projects. This effort should try to establish an alternative to existing financing programs. The possibility of both communities establish-

ing a financial institution that would be responsible for attracting investment dollars from public and private sources as well as advocating for changes in policies that limit the role of community economic development, specifically in Puerto Rico, should be explored as well.

- Establish a clearinghouse and network that could provide both communities with resources, opportunities, and important linkages with the CED field.

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